**Infant Feeding Policy Tool**

This tool has been developed to help you review your existing service policies, procedural or guideline documents, and includes elements recommended for the Tiny Bites program. Many of these practices also align with the NSW Health Munch & Move program as indicated throughout.

Using this tool can help your service enhance service delivery in the following areas;

* Breastfeeding
* Infant nutrition (infant feeding and responsive feeding practices)

Additionally, further statements which are related to breastfeeding and nutrition, have been included in this checklist that consider National Regulations ([Education and Care Services National Regulations, 168](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653#sec.168)) and legislation.

This tool has expandable and collapsible headings to help you navigate the relevant sections as you review your service policies or other documents as part of your Tiny Bites Action Plan.

Click on the small triangle on the left of the pink headings to expand the section and reveal sample policy statements.

You are welcome to insert any of the following statements into your service document, making any adjustments to the wording as you prefer.

# [**Breastfeeding**](#BF_practices)

## [**Recommended policy statements for Tiny Bites**](#BF_practices_TB) **and Munch & Move**

The following content is highly recommended for inclusion in your service’s policy, procedural or guideline document to align with Tiny Bites and Munch & Move practices.

* Families are made aware that our service is supportive of breastfeeding through the display of a sticker, poster, or other signage and are directly informed that our service supports breastfeeding at first contact or at orientation. (Note: this is also a Munch & Move recommended practice)
* Families are asked about their breastfeeding needs during enrolment, for example whether they would like to continue offering their infant breastmilk while in care. (Note: this is also a Munch & Move recommended practice)
* A feeding plan is developed for all infants, and includes those who exclusively use breastmilk, are exclusively formula-fed and infants who are fed a combination of these. (Note: this is also a Munch & Move recommended practice)
* A supportive physical environment is provided for parents to breastfeed or express breast milk. This is a private space with an electrical outlet, comfortable chair, change table, and nearby access to handwashing facilities and fresh drinking water. Refrigerator space is available to store expressed breastmilk. (Note: this is also a Munch & Move recommended practice)
* Educators use the following practices when feeding infants up to 12 months (with permission from families where required), such as;
* Responding to hunger and fullness signals.
* Ensuring the feeding environment is pleasant with few distractions.
* Feeding one infant at a time whilst talking to them and maintaining eye contact.
* Not using the bottle to comfort or soothe the child before considering their other needs (such as nappy changes or sleep).
* Not propping feeding bottles (i.e. when the bottle is held up by an object).

## **Additional policy statements related to regulations and legislation**

You may wish to include and elaborate on the following statements in your service’s policy, procedural or guideline document as they may relate to sector regulations and legislation. Links to relevant regulations are included for your reference. Further information can be found on the [ACECQA website](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/NutritionFoodBeveragesDietaryRequireGuidelines.pdf).

* Parents are supported to continue breastfeeding as long as the parent and child desire, while offering appropriate complementary foods from around six months of age. ([Sex Discrimination Act 1984](https://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/cth/consol_act/sda1984209/s7aa.html))
* Breastmilk and infant formula are handled safely during storage, thawing, warming, preparation and bottle feeding. ([Education and Care Services National Regulations](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653#sec.77), regulation 77)
* [Menu services only] A weekly menu is displayed and accessible to family members which accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided by our service each day. ([Education and Care Services National Regulations](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653#sec.80), regulation 80)
* Child enrolment records must include any cultural or religious dietary restrictions. ([Education and Care Services National Regulations,](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653#sec.160) regulation 160)

## **Optional policy statements related to best practice**

The following content is recommended for inclusion in your service’s policy, procedural or guideline document to align with best practice for breastfeeding, bottle feeding and responsive feeding practices.

* Families of infants (0-12 months) are provided with information regarding how our service supports breastfeeding and infant feeding on our website (if applicable) and/or as part of family orientation packs.
* Families are regularly provided with updates on the amount of breastmilk or formula consumed by their child.
* Our service supports the transition to infant formula where the infant is partially breastfed or the provision of breastmilk is discontinued before 12 months of age.
* Infants are offered cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around six months of age, in consultation with families.

# **Infant Nutrition**

## [**Recommended policy statements for Tiny Bites**](#BF_practices_TB) **and Munch & Move**

The following content is highly recommended for inclusion in your service’s policy, procedural or guideline document to align with Tiny Bites and Munch & Move practices.

* [Menu services only] Food provided by our service is consistent with infant feeding recommendations and the Australian Dietary Guidelines including vegetables, fruit, wholegrain cereals, dairy products, lean meats and alternatives. Meals and snacks on the menu are varied to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food options. (Note: this is also a Munch & Move recommended practice)
* [Lunchbox services only] Families are encouraged to provide food consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines by providing them with information and ideas on snacks and lunches that contain vegetables, fruit, wholegrain cereals, dairy products, lean meats and alternatives. (Note: this is also a Munch & Move recommended practice)
* Our service supports staff participation in regular professional development to broaden knowledge and understanding of children’s nutritional requirements, including infants. Nutritional education should also cover responsive feeding practices (e.g. hunger & fullness signals, role modelling healthy eating, etc.), infant feeding and breastfeeding.
* Educators role model healthy eating while sitting with, and supervising children during meals. Educators create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food, as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children. Educators are patient with messy or slow eaters.
* Educators encourage children to try new foods without pressure (i.e. without force feeding or bribes), for example, by suggesting they touch or smell the food. Educators praise children for trying new foods, however, children are not required to eat foods they don’t like. (Note: this is also a Munch & Move recommended practice)
* Educators respond to verbal and non-verbal cues, including signs a child is full and don’t require them to eat more than they need (e.g. avoiding statements such as “You need to clean your plate”). Educators support children to recognise when they are hungry or full, for example, by using words and gestures.
* Food is never used as a means to reward, comfort or entertain. Children are not threatened or punished by withholding food as a way to manage undesired behaviour. (Note: this is also a Munch & Move practice)
* Mealtimes are relaxed and enjoyable and children are not rushed to eat. Distractions are avoided by switching off screens and TVs, as well as removing books and toys from the mealtime area.
* Awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices is fostered through daily discussions, displays, and intentionally-planned or spontaneous learning experiences embedded throughout our service curriculum. (Note: this is also a Munch & Move practice)
* Families are offered infant nutrition information and education (e.g. webinars, fact sheets, newsletters). (Note: this is also a Munch & Move practice)
* Nutrition goals and achievements are reported in our service’s Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), annual reports or management meetings, where appropriate.

## [**Additional policy statements related to regulations and legislation**](#BF_practices_regulatory)

You may wish to include and elaborate on the following statements in your service’s policy, procedural or guideline document as they may relate to sector regulations and legislation. Links to relevant regulations are included for your reference. Further information can be found on the [ACECQA website](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/NutritionFoodBeveragesDietaryRequireGuidelines.pdf).

* [Menu services only] Our service cook plans the weekly menu based on recommended menu planning principles, to meet the daily nutritional needs of children whilst in care (i.e. Caring for Children ‘Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning’). The menu is on display for families to view at any time. ([Education and Care Services National Regulations](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653#sec.80), regulation 80)
* [Menu services only] Food or beverages provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity, and chosen based on each child’s dietary requirements, including their growth and development needs, as well as any specific cultural, religious or health requirements. ([Education and Care Services National Regulations](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653#sec.79), regulation 79)
* Safe drinking water is readily available (both indoors and outdoors) for children to consume throughout the day. ([Education and Care Services National Regulations](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653#sec.78), regulation 78)
* Our service collects information at enrolment related to children with food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements. We consult with each family to develop individual management plans at enrolment or orientation. [(NSW Food Act 2003 No 43)](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/2023-01-13/act-2003-043?query=VersionSeriesId%3D%2258462d05-c57d-4fcb-bd3e-18504dfd53cc%22+AND+VersionDescId%3D%22dec4bb82-4290-4b82-8d68-485fa276dccb%22+AND+PrintType%3D%22act.reprint%22+AND+(VersionDescId%3D%22dec4bb82-4290-4b82-8d68-485fa276dccb%22+AND+VersionSeriesId%3D%2258462d05-c57d-4fcb-bd3e-18504dfd53cc%22+AND+PrintType%3D%22act.reprint%22+AND+Content%3D(%22allergies%22))&dQuery=Document+Types%3D%22%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3EActs%3C%2Fspan%3E%2C+%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3ERegulations%3C%2Fspan%3E%2C+%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3EEPIs%3C%2Fspan%3E%22%2C+Search+In%3D%22%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3EAll+Content%3C%2Fspan%3E%22%2C+Exact+Phrase%3D%22%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3Eallergies%3C%2Fspan%3E%22%2C+Point+In+Time%3D%22%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3E13%2F01%2F2023%3C%2Fspan%3E%22#sec.8)
* We work in partnership with families of infants with special dietary requirements to develop an appropriate resolution so that children’s individual needs are met. ([Education and Care Services National Regulations](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653#sec.79), regulation 79)
* Food is stored and served at safe temperatures (i.e. below 5oc or above 60oc). Cooks use separate cutting boards for preparing raw meat; utensils and hands are washed appropriately before touching other foods. ([Education and Care Services National Regulations](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653#sec.77), regulation 77)
* Our service recognises, nurtures and celebrates the dietary preferences of children and families who come from various cultures, through developing strong partnerships with families and their community. ([Education and Care Services National Regulations](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653#sec.79), regulation 79)

## **Optional policy statements related to best practice**

The following statements are recommended for inclusion in your service’s policy, procedural or guideline document to align with best practice for infant feeding and responsive feeding.

* Our service follows the recommendations outlined in the current Australian Infant Feeding Guidelines, such as ensuring young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking. Snacks that are provided by our service for children are healthy and substantial enough to meet their energy and nutrient needs.
* [Menu services only] Our service ensures appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age including iron rich nutritious foods as part of infant’s first foods. The texture of foods we offer to infants between 6 and 12 months of age will match the infant’s developmental stage.
* Families receive regular communication about food and nutrition-related experiences within our service, and are provided with up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home.
* Families are discouraged to packing snack foods high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children’s lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, and high fat savoury crackers. Furthermore, our service ensures any fundraising products or events promote healthy or active lifestyles and advocate for children’s wellbeing.
* Educators make positive comments about nutritious foods to the children, without referring to foods as “good” or “bad”. Children are permitted to choose in which order they eat the foods provided.
* Our service promotes good oral health through learning experiences and daily ‘swish and swallow’ practice.
* Our service implements appropriate safe practices for handling, preparing and storing of food. For example, children and staff wash and dry their hands with soap before handling food or eating meals and snacks. Children are discouraged from handling other children’s food and utensils. Gloves or tongs are used by all staff handling ‘ready to eat’ foods.
* Staff at our service who are responsible for handling food regularly attend relevant training courses and share knowledge with all educators. Nutrition is included as a standing item on the staff meeting agenda to encourage staff discussions about nutrition-related items.
* Educators encourage older toddlers to help set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink. This provides children with opportunities to develop independence, confidence, and self-esteem.
* All families are provided with a copy of our service’s Nutrition and Breastfeeding Policy during orientation and are encouraged to contribute to the review and development of our service policy (procedure or guideline). Feedback is welcome at all times and will be considered by our service staff accordingly.

# **References**

[Australian Dietary Guidelines](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-09/n55a_australian_dietary_guidelines_summary_131014_1.pdf): A summary document on the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Developed by the Australian Government

[Infant Feeding guidelines](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n56b_infant_feeding_summary_130808.pdf): A summary document on the Infant Feeding Guidelines. Developed by the Australian Government

[Caring for Children](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/heal/Publications/caring-for-children-manual.pdf): A practical manual about food, nutrition and learning experiences for children 0-5 years. Developed by the NSW Government

[Responsive Feeding](https://aapch.com.au/responsive-feeding/): This position statement provides some background on responsive feeding. Developed by the Australasian Association of Parent and Child Health